

Remarks/Arguments

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action dated July 20, 1004. In this Amendment, claim 8 is amended, and claims 1-7 and 7-19 are unchanged. New claims 20-26 are added. Following entry of this amendment, claims 1-26 shall be pending in this application.

In the Office Action, claim 8 is rejected as being indefinite and claims 1-19 are rejected on prior art grounds.

For the reasons set forth below, these rejections are hereby traversed. The applicants hereby request reconsideration of these claims in view of the reasons set forth below.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 8 is rejected on grounds of being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112. The Applicant has amended claim 8 to include the language "fixed to a vehicle" instead of "fixedly connectable to a vehicle".

It is therefore submitted that any indefiniteness that may have existed in the claims is no longer present. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore requested.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *McManus et al.* In this regard, it is noted that *McManus et al.* claims priority from a provisional application filed October 24, 2000. In response, and in accordance with 37 CFR 1.131, the Applicant has included a Declaration of Raymond Blodgett, Jr. (the inventor) under 37 CFR § 1.131 swearing to a conception date for the present invention of at least as early February 4, 2000, an actual

reduction to practice date of at least as early as August 11, 2000, a constructive reduction to practice date of November 27, 2000 and diligence between all dates.

Accordingly, it is submitted that the *McManus et al.* reference can no longer be properly relied upon as prior art to the claimed invention. Hence, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 based on the *McManus et al.* reference and an indication of allowability thereof.

Claims 2 and 6-10 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *McManus et al.* These claims depend from claim 1 and thus for at least the reasons stated as to claim 1 are also allowable. However, these claims further limit the claimed invention and thus are separately patentable.

Independent Claim 11 is also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *McManus et al.* However, as stated above, in view of the Declaration of Raymond Blodgett, Jr. Under 37 CFR § 1.131, the *McManus et al.* reference can no longer be properly relied upon as prior art to the claimed invention. Hence, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 11 based on the *McManus et al.* reference and an indication of allowability thereof.

Claims 12-14 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *McManus et al.* These claims depend from claim 11 and thus for at least the reasons stated as to claim 11 are also allowable. However, these claims further limit the claimed invention as thus are separately patentable.

Independent Claim 19 is similarly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *McManus et al.* However, as stated above, in view of the Declaration of Raymond Blodgett, Jr. Under 37 CFR § 1.131, the *McManus et al.* reference can no longer be properly relied upon as prior art to the claimed invention. Hence, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the

rejection of claim 19 based on the *McManus et al.* reference and an indication of allowability thereof.

Claim Rejections 35 U.S.C. § 103

Dependent claims 3, 4, 5, 15-17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 on the *McManus et al.* reference alone or in combination with *Smith* or *Schneider*. In this regard, and as stated above, in view of the Declaration of Raymond Blodgett, Jr. Under 37 CFR § 1.131, the *McManus et al.* reference can no longer be properly relied upon as prior art to the claimed invention. Hence, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the rejection of these claims and an indication of allowability. However, it is noted that these dependent claims further limit the claimed invention as thus are patentable over and above their precursor independent claims.

Newly Added Claims

This Amendment adds new claims 20-26. These claims depend from claim 19 and thus for at least all the reasons set forth above, these claims are submitted as patentable. However, these claims further define and describe the invention and are thus patentable over and above independent claim 19.

Conclusion

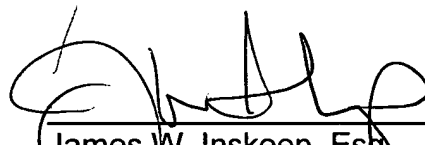
In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that all claims after entry of this amendment are in condition for allowance.

If any questions or issues arise that are more easily addressed by the Examiner through direct communication with the undersigned, the Examiner is cordially to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee which may be required in connection with this Amendment to deposit account No. 50-2809.

Respectfully submitted,

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